

Agenda for Discussion of Local Conservation Efforts in Southwest Alaska and the Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership for BBNA Full Board In-Service Workshop (9/15/2010)

A. Early History – 1980's and 1990's (Sue):

- Nushagak-Mulchatna Rivers Recreation Management Plan
- Nushagak Mulchatna Watershed Council

B. Formation – 2000 (Tim): Two “conservation” organizations formed in 2000 – The Nushagak-Mulchatna / Wood-Tikchik Land Trust and Southwest Alaska Conservation Coalition (SWACC).

- Similarities: Primary focus of both is protecting salmon habitat and subsistence use of Native allotments and ANCSA lands.
- Differences: Land Trust is incorporated and governed by a Board of Directors, can hold title to land or conservation easements, service area is West side of Bristol Bay. SWACC is an unincorporated association of people and organizations, overseen by a steering committee (The Conservation Fund, Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, BBNA and BBNC), primarily raises money for other organizations to protect land, serves all of Southwest Alaska from False Pass to the Aniak River on the Kuskokwim.

In 2000 two national conservation groups were engaged in the effort – The Nature Conservancy and The Conservation Fund.

First Deal: Harvey Samuelson's Native allotment on the Agulupak River.

C. Nushagak River Watershed Traditional Use Area Conservation Plan - 2005 to 2007 (Sue and Tim):

Curyung Tribe received a Tribal Wildlife Grant for \$200,000 from USF&WS to develop a traditional use area conservation plan for the Nushagak Watershed. BBNA and the Nushagak Mulchatna Watershed Council managed the project. The Nature Conservancy matched with \$200,000. The Conservancy hired Tim Troll, Executive Director of the Land Trust, to develop the Plan with guidance and direction from the Watershed Council. Plan approved for publication in November of 2007. Key Strategic Actions of the plan are:

- 1 Reserve adequate water flow for the Nushagak River and tributaries under existing laws for in-stream flow reservations;
- 2 Maintain the vegetative complex that supports moose, fish and other species within and adjacent to the floodplain;
- 3 Maintain water quality standards that protect wild salmon and other fish; and
- 4 Prevent habitat damage that could result from mining.

Discussion - Implementation of the Plan since 2007:

- Instream Flow Reservations on Koktuli, Mulchatna, Stuyahok, and Kaskanak Creek (Strategy 1 and 4- Lead organizations: BBNA and TNC)

- Fecal and water quality assessment of Lower Nushagak River (Strategy 3 and 4 – Lead organization: BBNA)
- Nushagak Mulchatna Soil Survey (Strategy 2 – Lead organizations: USDA NRCS and NMWC)
- Fish distribution and baseline water quality studies in and around the Pebble Prospect (Strategy 3 and 4 – Lead organization: TNC)
- Scientific assessment of the risks to salmon in the Nushagak and Kvichak watersheds from mining projects like those under consideration for the Pebble Prospect (Strategy 4 Lead organization - TNC)
- Scientific studies of hydrology, insects, diatoms and potential for copper toxicity at the Pebble Prospect (Strategy 3 and 4: Lead organization – TNC)
- Conservation purchases and conservation easements (Strategy 2: Lead organizations – SWACC, The Conservation Fund, TNC and Land Trust)
- Assessment of habitat value of Native allotments on the Nushagak, Mulchatna and Nuyakuk Rivers (Strategy 2-Lead organization: Land Trust)
- Agulowak and Lake Nerka Conservation Easement (Strategy 2-Lead organization: The Conservation Fund, BBNC and Aleknagik Natives LTD)
- Koliganek Native’s LTD Salmon Reserve Project (Strategy 2-Lead organization: Land Trust and Koliganek Natives LTD)

D. National Fish Habitat Action Plan – 2006 (Tim):

A national movement spearheaded by the USF&WS and several state fish and game agencies to “protect, enhance and restore” the nation’s fish habitat through the creation of partnerships between federal and state agencies and local interest groups. USF&WS funds program to about \$7 million / year. Legislation introduced in Congress in 2009 to make the program permanent and give it more money. Congressional action pending.

In 2008 SWACC applies for official recognition as a national fish habitat partnership. Recognition granted. Name changed to the SW Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership.

- New Partnership receives \$300,000 to support fish habit projects – supports Stuyahok, Mulchatna instream flow project, fish distribution surveys and a Bristol Bay fish habitat modeling project of the University of Washington.
- National Fish Habitat Board directs the Partnership to develop a strategic fish habitat conservation plan for SW Alaska. Partnership established technical committee to develop plan. Initial focus is watersheds flowing into Bristol Bay. Third draft under review.

Discussion of the basic framework of the Partnership strategic plan as developed to date.

Discussion of how the new Partnership fits into the overall conservation strategy for the Nushagak watershed and other watersheds in Bristol Bay.